Sixty-nine University of Kansas students have received Undergraduate Research Awards for spring 2009.

The awards support original, independent research by undergraduates enrolled on the Lawrence campus.

The University Honors Program administers the awards with funds from the offices of the provost and vice provost for research and graduate studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Faculty on the University Honors Research Committee used the following selection criteria: Overall quality of the proposal, student's academic record and ability to complete the proposed research project, project's potential contribution to knowledge and educational value of the research to the student.

More awards were given this semester than have been given in previous spring semesters.

According to Stan Lombardo, director of the honors program, the large number of spring awards is due to a combination of sustained hard work from the Honors Research Committee getting out the word about undergraduate research possibilities and the successful collaboration between the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies and the University Honors Program. Mark Daly, associate director of the honors program, noted a significant increase in strong applications from students conducting research for senior projects and theses in the humanities and social sciences.

Among the students to receive awards was Christopher Maxwell of Lansing, who will be researching "Parenting Style and Problematic Drinking Behavior in College Students."
For some University of Kansas students, the March 16 through March 20 spring break will be a chance to get away and goof off. For the 48 students going to Alternative Spring Breaks sites, it will mean giving back through volunteer efforts and perhaps altering their career paths after graduation.

Case in point: Ben Berning, a senior from Shawnee who has been Alternative Breaks co-director for the past four semesters. He went on his first Alternative Breaks trip in fall 2006 to Give Kids the World in Kissimmee, Fla., then became a site leader for the spring 2007 trip to Teach for America in Charlotte, N.C. When he graduates this spring with a bachelor’s degree in neurobiology, Berning plans to spend two years working for Teach for America as a high school biology teacher in inner-city Chicago.

KU students participating in Alternative Spring Breaks will work with agencies in Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Washington, D.C. Students have volunteered at five of the seven sites before. Two new destinations will be the Autism Society of Colorado in Denver and the Philadelphia, Pa., locale for Teach for America.

KU’s Alternative Breaks program selects service-learning trips that offer students a unique opportunity to make volunteer efforts part of their educational experiences.

The program costs participants $275 or $225 for site leaders and covers their transportation, housing and meals. Students selected for the program are required to attend the special projects in the community course to prepare for their trips. Participation in Alternative Spring Breaks counts as one unit for the University Honors Program, which requires students who want to graduate with honors to complete one or two honors units outside the classroom.

Elizabeth Bartkoski of Basehor will serve at the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, D.C., and Megan Logan of Lansing will serve at the Autism Society of Colorado in Denver.
David Clemmer, director of athletic bands at the University of Kansas, honored 50 individuals, some with multiple roles, for outstanding performance and leadership.

Among the students honored were Rebecca Stapfer of Fort Leavenworth, who was named freshman section leader of the clarinet section; Ryan Wolfe of Tonganoxie, who was named to the Marching Jayhawks Advisory Committee; and Lauren Wepking of Lansing, who received the “Outstanding Band Member” Award.

Student leaders for the 2009 season include drum majors, section leaders, assistant section leaders, drill instructors and Marching Jayhawks Advisory Committee members.

Section leaders work during music rehearsal sessions, and drill instructors coordinate drill rehearsals. Roles for the advisory committee begin in the spring and include recruitment and helping with summer band camp activities.
Centralia Lake watershed part of study

The Centralia Lake watershed has been selected as one of three lakes and their watersheds to be studied as part of a new research project coordinated by the Kansas Water Office. The goal is to reduce sedimentation rates in lakes by modifying watersheds with high soil loss to pattern those with low soil loss. Two other lakes selected for study include Banner Creek Lake west of Holton and Atchison County Lake in northwestern Atchison County.

High soil loss from land surface and stream bank erosion in a watershed results in rapid sedimentation and decreased water quality, decreased water storage capacity and diminished recreational value in lakes.

A high definition aerial video of the stream system in the Centralia Lake watershed is scheduled to be made by helicopter during the week of March 16. Weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances, however, may affect the timing of the flight. The video will document the present look of the streams in the watershed. Local conservation groups, county governments and law enforcement personnel will be notified in advance of the flyover.

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Centralia Lake study ...

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These lakes were chosen because their watersheds are comparable in size and all are located in the same eco region, where temperatures and precipitation rates are comparable. However, the sedimentation rates of these three lakes are expected to be different because of differing land uses, treatment histories, and age.

Additional watershed characteristics to be assessed during the 30-month study include mapping of the lake’s bottom contours and sediment deposits, the stream corridor’s physical characteristics and what shaped them, watershed stream hydrology, the geology and soils of the watershed, land use and related management practices, biology and water chemistry.

Information gathered will be provided to stakeholders in local Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy groups. The information will be valuable when decisions and actions are taken in the watersheds. Cost share funds for landowners who voluntarily put needed best management practices in place have typically been made available.

Jones inducted into Gold Key Society

Maggie Reid Jones, Seneca, has accepted membership in Golden Key International Honor Society and was honored during a recent induction ceremony at the University of Kansas.

“It is only fitting that a top academic achiever like Maggie be recognized by Golden Key,” said Alexander D. Perwich II, Golden Keys Chief Executive Officer. “Our members are inspired and motivated not only to achieve exceptional academic accomplishments, but also to make a positive impact on our world through the Society’s commitment to service.”
Hannah Nusz, a University of Kansas senior, is the co-coordinator for spring break sites for a student volunteer effort.

She helped select the sites for the March 16-20 Alternative Spring Breaks effort. About 48 KU students are spending their break volunteering.

KU students participating in Alternative Spring Breaks will work with agencies in Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Washington, D.C. Students have volunteered at five of the seven sites before. Two new destinations will be the Autism Society of Colorado in Denver and the Philadelphia, Pa., locale for Teach for America.

Students selected for the program will receive one unit of credit for the University Honors Program.

Nusz, a senior in African and African-American studies, is the daughter of Christy and Ricky Nusz. She is a graduate of Piper High School.

Another Kansas City, Kansas, student participating in the program is Leslie Oliva, who will go to Philadelphia, Pa., to

with other student volunteer activities, have helped earn KU its third consecutive mention on the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

Besides the Autism Society and Teach for America, volunteer sites include the AIDS Foundation, Houston, Texas; National Coalition for the Homeless, Washington, D.C.; Newcomer Center, Arlington Heights, Ill.; No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes, Tucson, Ariz.; and TreeUtah, Salt Lake City, Utah. participate in Teach for America. Oliva is a graduate of Sumner Academy.

Alternative Breaks was established in 1995 at KU with a spring break trip to El Paso, Texas, and has expanded every year since. The program works in partnership with KU's Center for Community Outreach, a student-run and student-funded organization that operates 15 volunteer programs and functions as a coordinating group for KU students interested in volunteer projects. The center's projects, along
Student journalists advance to state competition

By Dustin Zahorsky

On Feb. 20, Silver Lake High School journalism students traveled to Lawrence to compete in the regional contest. Nine standouts will advance to the state journalism contest on May 2 at the University of Kansas.

The Silver Lake students who qualified to state are Autumn Runyan, third in advertising; Heather Herrmann, second in feature writing; Chelsea Reid, third in headline writing; Shelby Brokaw, honorable mention in headline writing and honorable mention in newspaper design; Jeri Lyn Billings, honorable mention in news writing; Alex Hawkins, first in newspaper sports and honorable mention in yearbook sports; Jessica Stadler, honorable mention in newspaper sports and first in yearbook sports; Samie Darling, honorable mention in theme development and graphics; and Emilee Herrington, honorable mention in yearbook layout.

Jamie Manhart, journalism teacher, said she was pleased with how the students did at KU.

“As always, I am excited for the students who qualified and disappointed for those who did not,” Manhart said. “I was especially pleased with our on-site contests. We traditionally do very well with our carry-ins such as newspaper design, advertising, and theme development and graphics. However, Alex, Jessica, Heather, and Jeri Lyn did extremely well in the writing events at KU. I am proud of all of the students.”

A broadcast competition will be held at the state level only, not at regionals.

“Amanda Lewis and Jerod Barker will be competing as a team, as well as Hannah Hansen and Natalie Glotzbach,” Manhart said. “Historically, Silver Lake has done extremely well in the broadcast division.”

The broadcast competition was first offered in 2003. In the 3A/4A division at state, Silver Lake earned second and third places in 2003; third in 2004; second in 2005 and 2006; second and third in 2007; and third place and state champ Austin Roberson last year.

Alex Hawkins, senior photographer and yearbook staff member, was pleased with how he did this year at regionals.

“I was really excited when I took first place in newspaper sports,” said Hawkins. “I didn’t feel that good going into newspaper sports. I was very shocked to get first at regionals because I didn’t think I was going to do that good, but it felt good, and I’m not complaining.”

He said he thinks the state tournament will be a lot tougher.

“I don’t know if I’ll do as well at state, but I’ll try,” he said. “State will be a lot tougher than regionals, but it is really cool to go to state in two events. I got honorable mention in yearbook sports, and it was my first year to even go to regionals and to place in it at all was a good experience.”

Hawkins said contestants were given fact sheets at the regional tournament.

“In newspaper sports, it was a story about a new tradition for the football teams of two rival schools, and they gave me quotes and information, and I just had to write a story,” he said. “In yearbook sports, they gave me a story about the first annual dodge ball tournament. They gave me quotes, and I had to write about the information they gave me. I thought that was pretty cool.”

He said his interest in journalism has increased.

“I’m not going to major in anything that deals with journalism, but I might do some elected credits for journalism in college. I’ve taken journalism classes since Journalism 1 to diversify my experience at Silver Lake, and I just kept taking them because I’ve been having a lot of fun in them and it’s a unique experience.”

Another SLHS student who qualified to state was junior Shelby Brokaw, newspaper and magazine editor.

“It felt good to get honorable mention in headline writing, but I think I should have spent more time on it and put a greater effort because I think I could of done a lot better. And hopefully I do a lot better at state,” Brokaw said. “When I received honorable mention in newspaper design, it was a reward for my efforts. Most of the time I spent was over newspaper design. I didn’t do as well as I did last year, but hopefully I will do better at state.”

She did all her work prior to Feb. 20.

“In headline writing, there were three different stories. The first two I had to
do a straight up headline and the third one I had to create a feature headline that had images. In newspaper design, I had a summary of what the articles were about and I had to decide which ones were more important and put them on the page,” Brokaw said.

She said she plans to attend the University of Kansas.

“I plan on going to KU and, right now, I’m looking at newspaper writing, but because KU does offer a lot, and you do gain a lot of experience at KU, I might change when I get there,” she added.

— Dustin Zahorsky is a student at Silver Lake High School.
Series of college rapes prompt warning

By Laura Bauer

KANSAS CITY (MCT) — Rapes of 13 college-age women in Lawrence and Manhattan, Kan., appear to have been committed by the same man. Kansas authorities acknowledged Wednesday.

“At this point we feel there are definitely enough similarities that we need to tell people about the threat, that someone is out there,” said Ashley Anstaett, at the Kansas attorney general’s office. “In the interest of public safety, we need to share this information.”

The warning came days before spring break, significant because the rapes have largely occurred when classes are out and fewer people are about in the college towns. All of the attacks occurred off the campuses of the University of Kansas and Kansas State University.

Manhattan has investigated seven rapes since 2001 — plus one attempted rape the year before — and Lawrence has had six victims since 2004.

Until now, those police departments declined to connect the two series of sex crimes. While descriptions of the rapist and how most of the attacks were carried out often presented similarities, investigators had refused to say they were looking for the same man.
KU Frat Could Face Penalties In Student's Death

LAWRENCE (AP) — The Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter at the University of Kansas could face penalties in the death of a 19-year-old member at the fraternity house on campus last weekend.

The fraternity's national and local organizations are investigating the death of Jason Wren, of Littleton, Colo. A spokesman for the fraternity's national office on Wednesday declined to say how the fraternity could be punished.

Lawrence police say Wren was found dead at about 2:30 p.m. Sunday in his bed at the fraternity house. Police say toxicology test results are not yet available and they are not discussing what may have caused Wren's death. But his father, Jay Wren, says excessive drinking killed his son.

Wren's death is also being investigated by the owners of the fraternity's property, Kansas Alpha House Corp., a group of about eight alumni from the KU chapter.
Rapes At KU, KSU May Be Linked

By JOHN MILBURN
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — The attorney general's office announced Wednesday that it is investigating the link between 13 rapes that occurred over eight years in two college towns.

Attorney General Steve Six said there are enough similarities between the college-age victims, time of attack and manner of attack to suspect the rapes are connected.

Eight of the rapes were in Manhattan, which is home to Kansas State University, and five were in Lawrence, about 85 miles to the east and home to the University of Kansas. The 13 rapes happened from 2000 to 2008, and none was committed on campus.

Police in Lawrence and Manhattan have been investigating the crimes separately, but authorities only recently determined they had enough information to link the two cities' cases and share the findings with the public. Now, the attorney general is coordinating the investigation, which includes the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, said Six spokeswoman Ashley Anstett.

Investigators say the attacker appears to be a white male in his mid-20s, weighing 180 to 220 pounds and is 5 feet 9 inches to 6 feet 2 inches tall.

In each Lawrence rape, the attacker has been armed, but police haven't given other details, such as how he entered the home, what he wore or how he chose his victims. In the Manhattan cases, the attacker broke into the women's homes while they slept. He covered his forearms with dark clothing, used gloves and wore boots.

Six announced the possible connections in a written statement that also advised residents to be vigilant during spring break next week. He noted that when universities are not in session, apartments and other student housing areas may be targeted by criminals.

"We're encouraging Kansans to take extra safety precautions and report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement immediately," he said.

Lawrence police spokesman Bill Cory said information about the rapes has residents paying more attention to their surroundings.

"I believe the community's concerned. Everyone's concerned when you have a crime like this," Cory said.

Information has been distributed to students at both campuses, including a Feb. 26 newsletter at Kansas State that mentioned the "so-called 'serial rapist," and offered general information about sexual assaults.

Jim Jess, spokeswoman for the University of Kansas, said that college's students would be getting an e-mail later this week urging them to be cautious while away from school.

"There is an awareness, but I wouldn't say that anyone's in a state of panic," Jess said.

The University of Kansas has about 25,000 students at the Lawrence campus, while Kansas State has about 21,000 students at its Manhattan campus.